



NOW THEN.

BEN FROST. CAZ HAIGH. ON THE HORIZON.
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THOSE OF NOW THEN MAGAZINE. ENJOY THE READ.

EDITORIAL.

This month we have a bit of a green themed issue for you
with our contributors articles. Read on to learn about local
green groups, oil after the Deepwater Horizon crisis and the
importance of Sheffield to renewable technologies. Art comes
courtesy of Caz Haigh - fitting, I'm sure you'll agree.

Read my interview with noise master Ben Frost on page 39.
Read Ryan Finnigan’s imaginary conversation with Michael
Caine on page 14 if you fancy a chuckle.

We’ve got an extra special issue coming your way next month,
so stay on your toes.

SAM.

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LOCALCHECK.

TALKING GREEN.

HOSTED BY ALT-SHEFF.

THIS TIME OF YEAR ALWAYS FEELS TO ME LIKE TIME TO GET SERIOUS.

Back to school time, but in a good way. Shake off the lazy, hazy daze of summer and do something. Start something. Or join something. This edition of Now Then has a bit of a green theme, and if you're not already an eco-warrior perhaps you should be. Watch 'An Inconvenient Truth' and be afraid. Watch 'The Age of Stupid' and be very afraid. The tragic flooding in Pakistan was just the start. So what's happening in our city to save the planet? Of course, the Green Party is active in Sheffield, speaking up for the environmental side of politics as well as social justice on a great many issues. For example, it's the only serious party left opposing the privatisation of things like the health service. It's small but very active and democratic. Since its beginnings as the Ecology Party, it has shown a long-term growth trend, so it looks set to be the future, like garlic bread and global warming.

The party-building political path is not for everyone, but a couple of hardcore pressure groups are worth considering if you want to make a change. Friends of the Earth (FOE) isn't just about rainforests and cute toads. At the moment they're lobbying for new laws on the energy efficiency of private rented accommodation, which is low to non-existent, as you may know from experience. Pioneering city councils are already coordinating and supporting carbon-cutting measures, while others squat on the fence doing zilch. Why not find out from FOE which side Sheffield is on?

Greenpeace is a similarly powerful pressure group, the sheer number of members turning out or writing letters to make change happen. And they do things like skill-shares and training for campaigning. Their attention over summer has been on making BP see 'Beyond Petroleum' (get it?) This has included events around BP petrol stations in Sheffield, with peaceful awareness raising, otherwise known as non-violent direct action (NVDA). The issue of tar sands, another oily plot to mess up the environment for the sake of Big Profit, is also on Greenpeace's radar. Even if you only get involved in organisations like this because they offer great jobs in places like the US and the Philippines, don't feel guilty – go for it. It's far better fighting eco destruction than working in PR for BP!

Perhaps all this activism seems a bit too far from your reality. Why not sample what it's all about at the Free School planned by the Sheffield Social Centre group between 8th and 10th October. For a glorious weekend we're invited to learn from each other, enjoying the delights of workshops, skill-shares, political discussion, activism and entertainment. There will be a programme of events online. It's all based on principles of non-hierarchy (no bossy teachers!), anti-capitalism, equality and non-discrimination. So it's not the sort of free school David Cameron's got in mind. It means everyone's invited, including you and me.

One last thing worth a mention at this time of year; if you're a graduate with a passion for activist action there's only one course in the UK worth considering. 'Activism and Social Change' is a unique MA programme taught by hands-on activist lecturers for people who are involved in campaigning or may be thinking about it. It's based at the Geography department at the University of Leeds, but really crosses the curriculum like good education should. This is a very special course because you can research while working with activists. The term starts in late September. Catch it while it's running, before it's closed down by the forces of Babylon (or the university authorities!).

There are many ways to get active. Alt-Sheff, the Sheffield website for activists and sympathisers, has a massive and useful links section. Try clicking on 'Environment' or 'All' to browse them. Don't try to join everything – just choose what form of activity suits you and get going. Who knows where it will lead to? Maybe to a better future for us all.

Sheffield Green Party: sheffieldgreenparty.org.uk

Sheffield Friends of the Earth: sheffieldfoe.co.uk

South Yorkshire Greenpeace: greenpeace.org.uk/groups/yorkshire-south

Free School: sheffieldsocialcentre.org.uk

Activism and Social Change: activismsocialchange.org.uk

Alt-Sheff: alt-sheff.org.uk

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SHEFFIELD FUTURES.

SUSTAINABLE LIFE.

JAMES LOCK .

Humans in Sheffield, like all humans, are coming to terms with the fact that in a matter of years fossil fuels will no longer be able to sustain our energy consumption and may in the process have irrevocably damaged the global environment, its ecosystems, climatology and ability to sustain its multitudinous forms of life.

Our Luke Skywalker in all of this is the further development and application of sustainable technologies, whether this be reinventing the wheel as with Transition Towns, Abundance projects and allotment sharing (see this month's Favourites), more advanced technology like biotech in water systems, more efficient solar panels from Germany or hydrogen fuel cells in boats and cars. It does not matter how we do it, but it is important at this stage of the global denial that we act now to find sustainable methods of generating energy and food.

Sheffield is a place where you can live a more sustainable life and impact positively on your environment by getting involved with any number of varied and empowering projects on your doorstep. Take action, write a letter of support or outrage to your MP, make a donation or offer to volunteer on weekends. The fact that the Department of Energy and Climate Change has been forced to make cuts of £85 million this year is another good reason to find ways to help out. Grassroots community organisations are often the first in line for funding cuts and need your support and, just as importantly, the support of your government and councils.

This city is known internationally for its two million plus trees, eighty odd parks and no less than six hundred and fifty green and open spaces, let alone the national park next door. On reflection, it seems no great surprise that we are also considered a hub for certain sustainable technologies. The world's most energy efficient computer is made in Sheffield courtesy of VeryPC (see Traders). We have an innovative solar farm at Sheffield University called Project Sunshine, which aims to find solutions to our imminent energy and food shortages. Interestingly enough they are doing this with a firm focus on the changing climate, working to find out how this will affect our ability to garner energy in significant amounts from the sun as time passes. The project also aims to study societal perceptions of solar power technology by combining the pure and applied science departments in Sheffield. They show a minute-by-minute representation of how much energy their solar farm is producing online, which allows you to roughly chart the movement of clouds. Rather lovely, that.

In typical grass roots fashion, Sheffield also hosts the South Yorkshire Energy Centre at Heeley City Farm, itself a project dedicated to local sustainable food production, education and training projects. The SYEC is an eco-refurbished terraced house originally built in 1880. The centre itself is constructed from sustainable building materials and demonstrates how renewable energy can be harnessed and applied. Pop in and have a gander at the future of community energy and food production from Wednesday to Saturday, 11am-3pm.

It's important to remember the Stern Review of 2006, which was commissioned to examine the economic impact of climate change, as well as the cost of a transition to a low-carbon economy. As you may recall, Stern concluded that the benefits of strong early action considerably outweighed the costs of acting further down the line, both financial and environmental. The simple fact that this report is now four years old (with little significant change achieved since) provides justification for some to lose hope, to foster inaction and cynicism because those with more societal influence seem at best ignorant and at worse indifferent.

It is important to address this feeling of helplessness by acting in whatever small way you can to affect positive change in your local environment. Be this buying energy saving light bulbs, volunteering at your local transition network, or badgering your local MP, defeatist notions will only lead to defeat, so let us not encourage them.

As the famous anthropologist Margaret Mead once said: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

South Yorkshire Energy Centre - syec.co.uk

Heeley City Farm - heeleyfarm.org.uk

Green Homes - wildgoosebuild.co.uk

VeryPC - very-pc.co.uk

Recycling Revolution - recyclingrevolution.co.uk

Transition Towns - transitionsheffield.org.uk

Grow Sheffield - growsheffield.com

University of Sheffield Project Sunshine - shine.sheffield.ac.uk

Working Woodlands - woodlandgallery.co.uk

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THE ASHLAR AND STUCCO TRIPARTITE TRIUMPHAL ARCH WITH TWO LARGE BRONZE STATUES EITHER SIDE, DEPICTING THE ARTS (FEMALE) AND INDUSTRY (MALE), OR FOR US GEEKS INTO GREEK MYTHOLOGY, ‘HEPHEASTUS ‘AND ‘ATHENA’, TOPPED OFF DRAMATICALLY WITH A CUPOLA, CLOCK AND WEATHER VANE, IS A PERSONAL OBSESSION OF MINE. IT IS ONE OF MY FAVOURITE THINGS IN SHEFFIELD.I’VE BEEN WANTING TO GET AT IT FOR AGES.

There are those in Sheffield who want to leave the industrial past behind, get away from the Steel City brand and revamp it to a new one. I don't. It is what makes this city's landscape so rich and interesting, because it represents both a toughness and softness that makes up the characteristics of Sheffield and its inhabitants. It is who we are. Invisible steel girders still hold us together tightly. Why would we want to reject that embrace?

I think this archway is possibly one of the most significant depictions of what Sheffield is today. We are always trying to put our fingers on what it is about Sheffield that makes it so...Sheffield. This building does it all on its own merit.

The Green Lane Works arch stands tall, proud, solid and immovable. It's a breath-taking piece of artwork in its own right with a deep-seated history of hard work and toil behind it. It was attacked by the Great Flood and if you take the meanings behind the two gods that are either side of the entranceway, surely you couldn't find a better representation of what Sheffield is about?

Hepheastus was the god of technology, blacksmiths, craftsmen, artisans, sculptors, metals, metallurgy, fire and volcanoes. The goddess Athena represented war, civilisation, wisdom, strength, strategy, crafts, justice and skill. All of those adjectives can still be applied to us in modern times - just replace war with opinionated or feisty.

Green Lane Works was built by Hoole & Company in 1795. They produced and manufactured ornamental stove grates and fenders in various metals, mainly bronze. It is believed that the sculptor, chief designer Alfred Stevens, was responsible for designing the gateway.

Henry E. Hoole became Mayor of Sheffield due to the company winning many prestigious awards and in 1860 commissioned Stevens to carry out the design of new elements of the works, including the archway, to celebrate these achievements. Stevens' work had contributed to many of the awards the company won.

He left many designs and drawings for apprentices to study when he returned to London. Strangely, my connection to Green Lane Works and its architecture may be because the sculptor was born in Blandford Forum, Dorset, my own county of birth. There is a lot of similar architecture and sculptures in Blandford Forum and I've always felt a feeling of familiarity with the works since the moment I set eyes on it. It could just be me being fanciful.

In the Great Sheffield Flood, according to Mick Armitage's website, the Green Lane Works were considerably damaged: "A large room, filled with stoves, fenders and so forth, was flooded to a depth of four feet. Trunks of trees were washed into the grinding wheel, the engine and boiler were covered with debris and a great quantity of miscellaneous property was destroyed."

Although the structure is in obvious need of some love and repair - parts are peeling and flaking away - the gold of the lettering, clock and weather vane still catch the light on sunny days. In fact the weather vane has not aged at all and looks brand new. It has lost none of its grandeur and when I stop by it, there always seems to be a reverential silence surrounding it combined with a tranquillity that is hard to describe and seemingly misplaced in such an industrial area.

There are so many of these amazing buildings in Sheffield. My friends and I are often talking about this and that. Have you seen that warehouse? Or visited that site and stuck a nose through a broken window or weather warped doorway? We often sheepishly say we would like to go inside if we were not on our own, frightened of being berated by some burly but probably non-existent security man and a rabid Alsatian, attacked by a vicious homeless person or caught in some old mantrap, our skeletons to be found years later. I think most of us grew up on the Goonies.

This archway is such an illustrious piece of Sheffield's heritage I sincerely hope that whatever plans are underway for it (if any) include giving this archway back to Sheffield and making it a public piece of art for all to enjoy. If anything represents us culturally, it is Green Lane Works.

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ON THE HORIZON.

ENVIRO-GUILT PANGS AND OIL COMPANIES.

SIMON SMITH.

In a morning haze my drowsy eyes flicker from my rusty bicycle to the less than inviting weather outside. Looks like rain.

Later, while gnawing feverishly at the steering wheel, deeply embedded in the inevitable morning traffic, I get ample time to savour the enviro-guilt pangs and reflect that I would have gotten to work faster if I had fucking well walked. To make matters worse, the good people on Radio 4 tell me today will be dry and sunny and also bring me the latest developments from the most recent war in the gulf. I am of course referring to the battle waged against the oil spillage from BP's Deepwater Horizon rig in the gulf of Mexico, the worst environmental disaster in US history and a gulf conflict we can all finally agree really is about the oil. The same sticky black wonder-gunk that with some refinement and the help of the internal combustion engine is currently propelling me...nowhere fast.

Now that we have finally managed to put together a contingent of enough scuba-clad little Dutch boys to clog the breach, modest estimates put the total crude oil leakage at around 205 million gallons. With an ecological disaster of potentially nightmarish proportions, and local fishing and tourism industries in dire straits, the finger pointing is far from over. In light of revelations concerning laughable safety standards, poor disaster contingency planning, profit-driven corner cutting, slack industrial regulation and Congressional cronyism with 'Big Oil', it's hard to know exactly where and how to vent our collective spleen.

We all know that BP is begrudgingly footing the bill for the mounting clean-up costs and a myriad of compensation claims, but as the fickle eye of the media turns elsewhere, the impact of the catastrophe is in danger of dispersing with the oil. How can we make sure our collective disgruntlement isn't ignored this side of the Atlantic? How do we take our own personal pound of flesh for all those oil bedraggled pelicans and dead turtles? Several environmental groups and Facebook collectives are urging us to protest with our wallets and boycott BP at the pumps, to use our consumer power to kick them where it hurts. PR is a big deal in the world of commerce and when a brand has its public image tainted it can be disastrous for business; just ask Nestlé. Maybe by treating BP like the weird kid at school who smelt funny and collected his own scabs we can force other oil companies to take notice of our collective indignation, but let's not be so naive as to think that the rest are any more environmentally responsible than BP. If you think 'ethical petrol' isn't an oxymoron then you, my friend, are a moron. If we are going to fill our tanks with the help of Royal Dutch Shell, the biggest corporation in the world, we would do well to consider the little reported situation in the Niger delta before picking up our nectar points.

Decades of oil pollution resulting in environmental and humanitarian crisis in the Niger delta highlight the catastrophic irresponsibility of companies such as Shell and ExxonMobil. Reports that that up to 1.5 million tons of oil (that's 50 times more than the Exxon Valdez tanker disaster in Alaska - remember that one?) have been spilled over the past half century don't often make front page news as they take place off the radar in Africa. How about Chevron (that's Texaco to you and me) dumping 18 billion gallons of contaminated water into the already oil-stained Ecuadorian rainforest? Can we really make BP a pariah of bad practice and happily assume that the rest of the industry is squeaky clean?

Ethicalconsumer.org has compiled an ethical buyer's guide to petrol so you can make a more informed choice at the pumps, but the fact that supermarkets aren't obliged to disclose the provenance of their fuels makes this a lot trickier. It's also missing the bigger picture somewhat. I think we have to hold our hands up, recognise our own complicity and acknowledge that consumer demand drives production.

The inevitability of peak of oil production means that conventional sources of the black stuff will become scarcer (that means more expensive) until harder and more environmentally unsound methods of procurement look increasingly attractive to an oil starved world. The Deepwater Horizon spill highlights the dangers of drilling for deeper and deeper oil deposits, but what about when those reserves are situated under Arctic Sea ice, where oil spill clean-up enters the realm of science fiction? Or instead consider the extraction of bitumen from the controversial Alberta Tar sands, a major source of unconventional oil unfortunately located under vast tracts of Canada's pristine boreal forest.

Even as oil poured into the gulf, BP, Shell and other big players were pouring similar volumes of cash into environmentally destructive tar sand strip-mining projects. Making liquid fuels from these deposits requires huge water and energy input for extraction and refinement, generating three times the amount of greenhouse gases per barrel as the production of conventional oil. And that's before we burn the stuff doing doughnuts in Tesco car park. Boreal forests are an important sink for carbon, so in light of the now undeniable evidence for man-made climate change it's fair to say tar sands aren't the greenest choice.

When it takes more energy to extract fossil fuels than would be subsequently gleaned from their combustion, there will be no profit to be made. Fuel prices will sky rocket, hitting the poorest first and hardest, and then eventually it will dry up. The resulting social problems will be catastrophic. As long as there are profits to be made, the industry will take increasingly serious risks with our environment and will probably continue to be heavily subsidised by our governments in the process.

In 2000, BP spent more on rolling out their new logo than on investing in renewable energy, despite their new and glaringly ironic 'Beyond Petroleum' slogan. It is clear from a whole host of similarly deceptive PR exercises and shameless greenwashing that 'Big Oil' isn't in any real hurry to turn the tide on such flagrant hypocrisy while it still remains profitable. As more endangered species wash up on the shores of our favourite summer holiday destinations, I think the big issue we need to address is our unrepentant addiction to hydrocarbons. I'm not talking going cold turkey here, but surely it would be better if we chose to reduce consumption rather than being forced to by shortage; to use the remaining reserves of easy-to-exploit fossil fuels to develop renewable energy technology while we still have the resources and ease ourselves off slowly into more sustainable, holistic lifestyles and a more environmentally conscious future.

On a personal level we can take responsibility for our actions and make choices in terms of the energy we use, the products we consume, the miles we drive and the miles our food travels. Do we really need Korean kumquats when British fruit is in season? Must we take two foreign holidays a year when the Peak District is just on our doorstep? How about recycling...or just buying less manufactured crap altogether? Admittedly your battered Fiat Uno isn't a comparatively big contributor to the world's combined CO2 emissions, but maybe it's worth considering an electric car for the school run. Car sharing, keeping your tyres optimally pumped and fuel conscious driving (not racing rude boys at the lights) are all ways of maximising efficiency if you do have to get behind the wheel. What about buying local produce or even growing your own veg and saving a few pennies while you're at it? Check out local Transition Towns projects in your community for cohesive and innovative ways to move towards a sustainable future (see website below). Get out cycling or walking instead of driving where possible and burn off last night's curry calories in the process. By all means boycott BP at the pumps but maybe also take a few small steps towards boycotting fossil fuels altogether. I'm going to have to cycle to work every day now or be forever known as a sanctimonious bastard. Join me.

Boycottbp.org

Ethicalconsumer.org

Greenpeace.org/canada/en/campaigns/tarsands

Eartheasy.com

Sustainablestuff.co.uk

Transitionsheffield.org.uk



Pillow Talk.

AN IMAGINARY CONVERSATION WITH MICHAEL CAINE.

RYAN FINNIGAN.

THE LAST THING I EXPECTED TO SEE AS I ROLLED OVER, WAKING FROM A DEEP SLUMBER, WAS MICHAEL CAINE IN MY BED.

He was tucked in nicely, sat half upright with a black duvet up to the black tie of the impeccable suit he was wearing. “He’s not naked! I probably haven’t had sex with him,” I thought as I also sat up, fully dressed in clothes I didn’t recognise.

“Ahhh. You made it, my boy,” he said with a wry smirk, the sentence precisely timed to fully emphasise the weight of the words of the speaker. “For what?” said I. “For the interview!” said Caine. Of course! The interview.

I reached under the duvet involuntarily and found a tape recorder and my notes, as a screen icon poured us tea from my novelty Jaws: The Revenge teapot. “Ok, I’d like to start with Alfie, Mr. Caine,” I said hesitantly, already skipping over Zulu and The Ipcress File. “Please, call me Michael”. “Michael. As Alfie, you speak directly to the camera, which was revolutionary at the time. How did that feel as an actor?”. “Well, it was great for the audience. To have a character that directly addresses you, it makes you feel part of the film. As an actor, I was just looking at a camera!” He wore a big grin and I couldn’t concentrate on his words, all the while thinking if I could start to engage him in a conversation about bad remakes of his films and worse, Jude Law. No, no, wait. They remade Sleuth together AND Caine was in the remake of Get Carter. That was an awkward moment avoided. My mind was off and I started to think about Sleuth and Laurence Olivier. Was he an awful man? It’s a great film but one so obvious in its trickery. Does he think that? No, it’s a classic. I can’t ask that. Stick to the notes.

“How many times do you get asked about the “bloody doors off” scene in The Italian Job?” I asked with a hint of shame. “Too many bloody times!” he said with a menacing laugh. All of a sudden, I realised this is a man who throws people off car parks. I’m a big man but I’m in bad shape. For him it’s a full time job. Time to behave myself.

He laid flat, soft white hair on my pillow, gazing at the ceiling as we talked. At one point he rolled to face away as I mentioned Escape to Victory and I thought about spooning him but then caught myself. Michael did too and rolled back, continuing professionally as we waxed lyrical about Educating Rita, Woody Allen and Steve Martin. It was a career spanning interview that descended into a montage of laughter and custard creams. Feeling informal, I braved more questions. Why were you even in Inception? Is Plan B a knob? Is Christian Bale very method? Did he punch a dog for real?

Both crying with laughter, I stopped to praise Little Voice. “You’re too kind. Too kind. This is the best day I’ve had since I last saw Bob Hoskins”. “Me too, Michael, me too”. With a heavy heart he got up and tucked me in. It had been a long day and I had to sleep. “Now, I’m gonna help you sleep boy, so look into my eyes”. I gazed as eyes that had seen it all looked into mine. “Now if I keep talking and I don’t blink and I just keep going and I don’t blink and I keep talking....” Caine repeated in that monotone voice. I drifted off and he ruffled my hair. Standing silhouetted in the door way, he whispered, “Goodnight, you prince of Maine. You king of New England”.

I awoke and despite being there for seemingly hours, it had all been a clichéd dream. Yet, I assure you it happened and is as real as any other memory. I got up and began to potter around but was hit with instant regret. If I meet Michael Caine again, I will be sure to raise The Muppet Christmas Carol and tell him it’s the most underrated leading male performance of all time.



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Summer may be fading somewhat, alongside the memory of some of Sheffield’s recent city-wide events, but Autumn brings some other large scale cultural events to Sheffield worth your attention. More details below.

In the meantime, two poems and one prose piece for you this month. Keep the submissions coming to: subs@nowthenmagazine.com

OFF THE SHELF LITERATURE FESTIVAL

offtheshelf.org.uk

Off The Shelf is one of the North’s most respected literary festivals and this year’s line up includes some of the following;

Fatima Bhutto, Jenny Eclair, Alastair Campbell, Will Hutton, Michael Morpurgo, Lesley Glaister, Michelle Paver, Jackie Kay, Audrey Niffenegger, Jonathan Coe, William Nicholson, Elizabeth Nobel, Korky Paul, The Fugitives, Dr David Starkey, Tim Butcher, Paul Muldoon, Blake Morrison, David Peace and Tony Benn.

Here at Now Then and Word Life HQ, we’re pleased to announce we’ve got a hand in a few upcoming shows:

NOW THEN AND WORD LIFE PRESENTS: OFF THE SHELF LITERATURE FESTIVAL OPENING PARTY

THE FORUM, DEVONSHIRE STREET, 10TH OCTOBER

7pm – Free Entry

Now Then helps open the festival with a party celebrating literature and music featuring Brighton-based funk outfit Mean Poppa Lean, John Fairhurst (“possibly the finest guitarist you’ll ever see” – BBC Manchester) and poet and comedian Kate Fox (Poet in Residence on Radio 4’s Saturday Live), as well as a Sheffield poetry slam.

SIGNPOSTS AND WORD LIFE PRESENT VERBALIZED - UK TOUR OF SOUTH AFRICAN AND BRITISH POETS

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A dynamic journey through the streets of Johannesburg, Leeds, London & Capetown. 9 poets from SA & the UK bring a unique one off performance full of rich soul stirring song & explosive lyrical injection.

From the UK, curator Zena Edwards features alongside Khadijah Ibrahiim, Kayo Chingonyi, Dzifa Benson & Avaes Mohammad. From South Africa, featured poets are Mpho ya Badimo, Mbali Vilakazi, Masana Mulaudzi & Bulelwa Basse.

LATHKILDALE

In Lathkildale all paths and lanes
are veiled with lacy meadowsweet.

Dandelions, seed-blown, soft,
an ermine trim for a grass-green frock.

Nettle flowers are little lamps
or canopies for fairy things

and pink and white may-blossom sprays,
against dark wood, are a bride’s bouquet.

In shade, wild garlic’s creamy crowns,
fragrant, modest, hide in glades.

Down below the river dreams
in mercury coils as if asleep.

Above, in fields, all silver green
with wind-crooked grass graze cloud-soft sheep.

Jenny Donnison.

THE ARGUMENT

still stews in the hearts of these two: a subtle flaw
in the foundations of the tall terraced house they moved to
six months back – this lass who, just now, is sat on the end
of a bed coaxing tremulous note after note from a clarinet
as her man props the pitched tent of Frost’s A Witness Tree
on the breakfast bar, looks out at the yard, flicks the kettle on.
A cold winter: their first under the same roof. The sun squints
through clouds as if someone reading a paper full of adverts.

And it isn’t that they won’t come through this, a lover’s tiff
where one – does it matter which? – has been bruised
by the other’s words or some close-to-meaningless kiss

but what the house alone, insidious, seems able to articulate.
Cups knocked from a table. A dust-thick windowsill. A washer
hurtling through its final cycle, like a HGV thundering downhill.

Ben Wilkinson.

Ben Wilkinson’s poems have appeared in Poetry Review, Poetry London, The Spectator, The London Magazine, and the TLS. He works as a bookseller, reviewer and as an editor for The Poetry Archive. His pamphlet of poems, The Sparks, was shortlisted for an Eric Gregory Award in 2009. He lives in Sheffield.

LOCAL PEOPLE @ LONG DISTANCE

Alright Woodrow, a long time has passed since we last conversed in a suitably intoxicated manner, so I thought I’d take the plunge and invite you into a world of casual humour and meandering rivers of splaff.

In the best of many fine slices of news enjoyed this month: Liam agreed to join the Good Fight and pull on the shirt of the mythical Dynamic Ert FC.

Correct! Me and LG, dishing out the defensive grit, for the serious underdogs of the 2010 D. Lombardi Cup!

Man, what a truly fantastic prospect. I’m looking forward to it with the fevered anticipation of a man on a flight to visit the Pope. With high hopes, rosary beads, and repressed feelings of major Karmic Doubt.

Neither of us can kick the ball in anything close to what could reasonably be claimed, by world class linesmen with perfect 20/20 vision, to resemble a straight line.

Not even close.

We may well get ripped apart by young whippersnappers who haven’t yet been inducted into the heavy culture of hard drinking, hard drugging, and wild laps round Kelso Square in supercharged Ford Focus Zetec’s.

Then again, we might link up in a Maldini-Costacurta rock of tactically astute venom. A super-hardened Scottish Wall of Sheffield Steel. Dancing to the snap of young shins and the dull thud of noses bouncing on the tips of our elbows. Bedlam on the park and on the terraces. The good old days. Black police horses, battens, mud-trampled scarves, and smashed bottles of Irn Bru stuck in the meaty rear of upper thighs.

“Fuckin’ come ahead Wee Man!”

Permanent criminal records forged in the summer sunshine of Woodside Park.

However, in the interest of sport, I have taken the positive mental stance that we will defy the Gods and win the D. Lombardi Cup. I will thus be focused on little else from here until dawn on July 10th. For this is the date we face our destiny and grasp our chance to compete for a trophy with so much history that it makes one feel worryingly inconsequential when it’s considered, in detail, during stolen moments of hazy self-reflection.

D. Lombardi, the Italian proprietor of Lombardi’s Café, the well known central hub of Kelso Life circa 1997, was a man of gigantic appetites when it came to high-cholesterol ice cream Sundaes. And it was through this frozen dairy habit (though some still blame the daily injections of Mexican Brown directly into his left eyeball), that Lombardi met his fate. But in a touching illustration of the perpetual Kindness of Man, Lombardi, now on his deathbead, beckoned across his younger brother. And as Agostino bent his knees to hear the softly spoken last words of his sibling, Lombardi, in decreasingly quieter words, whispered, in a phrase now enscribed in Scottish Borders folklore and etched on the side of most gable ended town centre properties; “Immortalize my name by sponsoring a local five-a-side football tournament. The People must never forget”.

Lombardi then added, “Make sure its run by Minnie Tait. He’s a meticulously organized man, with a head 100% free from any form of hair; exactly the type of creature we need to make this work”, before slipping off into reverie-laced tunnels of unknown dimensions and undying souls.

So, shit, yeah man. Should be good to get back on the field. Oil up the thighs and smear the white gloop of Vicks vapor rub, in a Hitler Moustache Arrangement, onto my quivering top lip.

Eight cans of bong-sunk Tennents Super, immediately after the first group match, then a wild twelve minutes of violence laced flicks ‘n tricks, down the wing like a graceful Brazilian Elk, before smashing into an unfavorable 30/70 challenge; leaving with the ball and the bloodied Achilles tendon of the opposition Captain, flapping distractedly around my right boot.

And when the whole bloody affair comes to an eventual end – where do we go from there?

The Sporty, probably. The flaming torch of Kelso nightlife. A slime-coated pond where local insects congregate to exchange bodily fluids and roam like fat mountain gorillas driven wild by an unsatisfied hunger for fresh meat.

And when I grow tired of Britney Spears and cheap watery tequila, and quickly leave the premises via the alarmed fire door, I’ll probably find my way atop the blue and white Civic Week Presentation Stage, before hastily bundling my nuts out from my jeans. Grabbing them firmly in an almost-choreographed forward thrust. Turning them sideways and jamming my dick between the two distorted nuggets, whilst asking passersby, with the half-serious face of a man with genuine mental issues, to “nosh my cock burger”.

God Bless D. Lombardi. The People must not forget.

Peash.

Greig Fenton.

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CAZ HAIGH.

2H ECOWARRIOR.

INTERVIEW BY JONES.



Brilliant, simple and conscious work this month from local lady Caz Haigh.

Most female artists (like women in general) tend to have their act together, with styles that instantly slips into commerical illustration without a pause. Miss Haigh manages to do this whilst retaining some form of dialogue with the viewer, a bit of soul that I find sadly lacking in most mainstream doodles.

I really like her work. Lessons in how to do sparse well, or how to not clutter and confuse an image, should definitely be taken note of.

BASICS, PLEASE - WHAT STARTED YOU DRAWING?

I was brought up in a very crafty home. My Mum always encouraged my sister and I to make things. We always had some kind of project on the go, whether it was making papier-mâché balloon heads, scratching away at foil art, decorating egg shells or making awesome tie-dyed t-shirts. Art was fun!

CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE PROCESS OF STARTING A NEW PIECE?

I really enjoy exploring concepts, so I spend a lot of time writing and sketching out roughs until I arrive at something interesting. Once I have an idea I am happy with, I start to flesh it out by experimenting with different materials and mediums. I'll explore pretty much anything I can get my hands on - scraps of paper, cuttings of fabric, modelling clay... even fruit and veg. I find that tactile exploration helps develop my idea and it drives my process, even if the end result is a 2-D illustration.

WHERE DO YOU GET YOUR INSPIRATION FROM?

Nature is my biggest inspiration. I was born in Hong Kong and spent a lot of time playing on beaches, which at times were heavily polluted with plastic waste. Seeing such a beautiful location destroyed by human activity has haunted me ever since and I feel a huge sense of responsibility to care for the natural world. Thematically, I've always been interested in drawing organic forms, though now I'm increasingly concerned with making work which contains environmentally-friendly messages and incorporates green materials and processes.

TOOLS - WHAT DO YOU USE REGULARLY AND WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE?

My 'tool kit' is always expanding and it can change dramatically from one project to the next. I don't limit myself to particular tools and materials as I feel this can hinder my working process and ultimately the final pieces. I use new methods, materials and techniques to keep things fresh. I'm a bit of an addict when it comes to hoarding images and my camera helps to feed this habit. I carry it with me to capture moments of inspiration and record interesting textures, shapes and surfaces. One of my favourite tools is my wacom graphics tablet, as it allows me to work intimately into an image, though I'm looking at finding a balance between digital and handmade work as I'd like to cut down my use of computers and consumption of electricity.

WHAT OTHER ARTISTIC MEDIA HAVE HAD AN EFFECT ON YOUR ART?

Sculpture plays an important part in my art. I enjoy making models out of unusual items as this helps me get different perspectives on a subject. It's also very therapeutic - I used my ceramics class as a form of escapism at school. I get the same sort of release when I tweak my line work. I think I sometimes get a bit too obsessive over detail and can spend hours reworking, so I'm trying to learn to draw the line somewhere.

As my work can be quite detailed and time consuming, I'm really into music which creates a good atmosphere. Cinematic Orchestra, Bonobo and Nightmares on Wax are frequently looped. However, if I have an imminent deadline, I'll play something heavier like Queens of the Stone Age.

HOW DO YOU SPEND YOUR DAYS?

A typical day would involve researching, rendering and formatting ongoing projects while squeezing in some self-initiated work in between. I've recently been really busy preparing for exhibitions and creating artwork for a couple of musical acts. Even though I've been busy I'm always looking for interesting projects.

I relax by going to gigs, galleries and skipping on my roof top. I also enjoy playing old school board games and watching nostalgic movies. When I get the chance, I head out to the Peaks to see my family and dog Ellie. We're really lucky that Sheffield is so close to such a beautiful landscape.

OUT OF YOUR RECENT WORK, WHICH PIECE HAVE YOU ENJOYED MAKING THE MOST?

I was really pleased with a series of hand illustrated playing cards I auctioned to raise money for The Sea Shepherd Conservation Society - a marine wildlife conservation organisation. The project enabled me to combine my art with my passion for the environment and it showed me how I could use my work to educate, inform and campaign. The Sea Shepherd engage in direct action campaigns against illegal fishing activities, such as whaling in the Antarctic. I'd love to be able to crew on one of their ships, but I just don't think I have the balls, so customising playing cards suits me for now.

The project will feature alongside other work I'm doing for Emerge 2010, which is a part of the London Design Festival. I've been asked to produce a couple of pieces of artwork which will be displayed throughout the London Underground in September.

HOW HAS YOUR ART EVOLVED OVER TIME?

My earlier work felt like I was jumping through hoops for my degree and seemed to lack purpose. I didn't really have a voice and I was producing work that lacked soul. Since going freelance I've found the freedom and confidence through meeting other like-minded artists and musicians, to make more meaningful, heart-felt pieces.

A turning point in my work came from experiences in a variety of conservation projects I was involved with while working as a Divemaster over the last few summers in Thailand. This time really opened my eyes to how we are affecting the world's oceans. I've had this ongoing battle in my head about wanting to travel as a nomad beach rat, being more hands-on with clean ups and awareness programmes. However, I don't think I could cope without stimulation from art, live music and culture. For now, I'd like to put my passion for the environment into my artwork and maybe one day "follow the dream".

HOW HAS ART IN GENERAL CHANGED SINCE YOU STARTED?

I'm a newbie to the industry, so don't think I'm qualified to talk about any major shifts in art, but, having become increasingly aware of how poor or non-existent environmental practices are out there, I know what I would like to see change in the future. It would be great to see people producing more conscientious design, and considering paper stocks and print methods throughout production. As print technologies have advanced, there are much cleaner options available and they really don't break the bank. I understand that you can't be 100% green, but it won't hurt to try.

ANY TIPS ON HOW TO SURVIVE MAKING MONEY FROM YOUR ART? DO YOU FIND IT IMPORTANT?

As I'm only just setting up full-time I'm not really in a position to comment, but I'd say follow any leads, no matter how small they first appear. It seems to be working for me at the moment. Things are snowballing right now and I'm hoping to keep up the momentum. As long as I'm happy and healthy, money isn't important, but it would be nice not to worry about paying the bills.

WHAT DO YOU DISLIKE IN ART?

I don't like the stuffy, snobbish air you get in some circles and galleries. Art should be accessible for everyone, not elitist.

WHAT MAKES YOU SMILE IN ART?

Thought-provoking and inspiring work which forces you to see something from a different perspective. I admire artists who combine really clever concepts with well-executed aesthetics. I've seen a lot of fantastic films and documentaries recently which I consider great forms of art. I'd recommend watching The Cove, Sharkwater and The End of the Line. They're all beautifully shot documentaries highlighting the plight of our world's oceans. They definitely changed the way I view nature.

GOOD ADVICE YOU WISH YOU'D BEEN TOLD EARLIER?

Know who you are, where you're coming from and where you want to go.

Upcoming exhibitions: **Emerge 2010** at London Design Festival, 16th - 26th September at The Cube, Shoreditch, London and various stations throughout the London Underground.

cazhaigh.co.uk



the old house

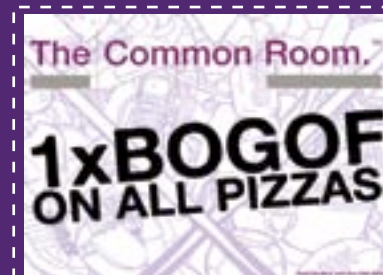
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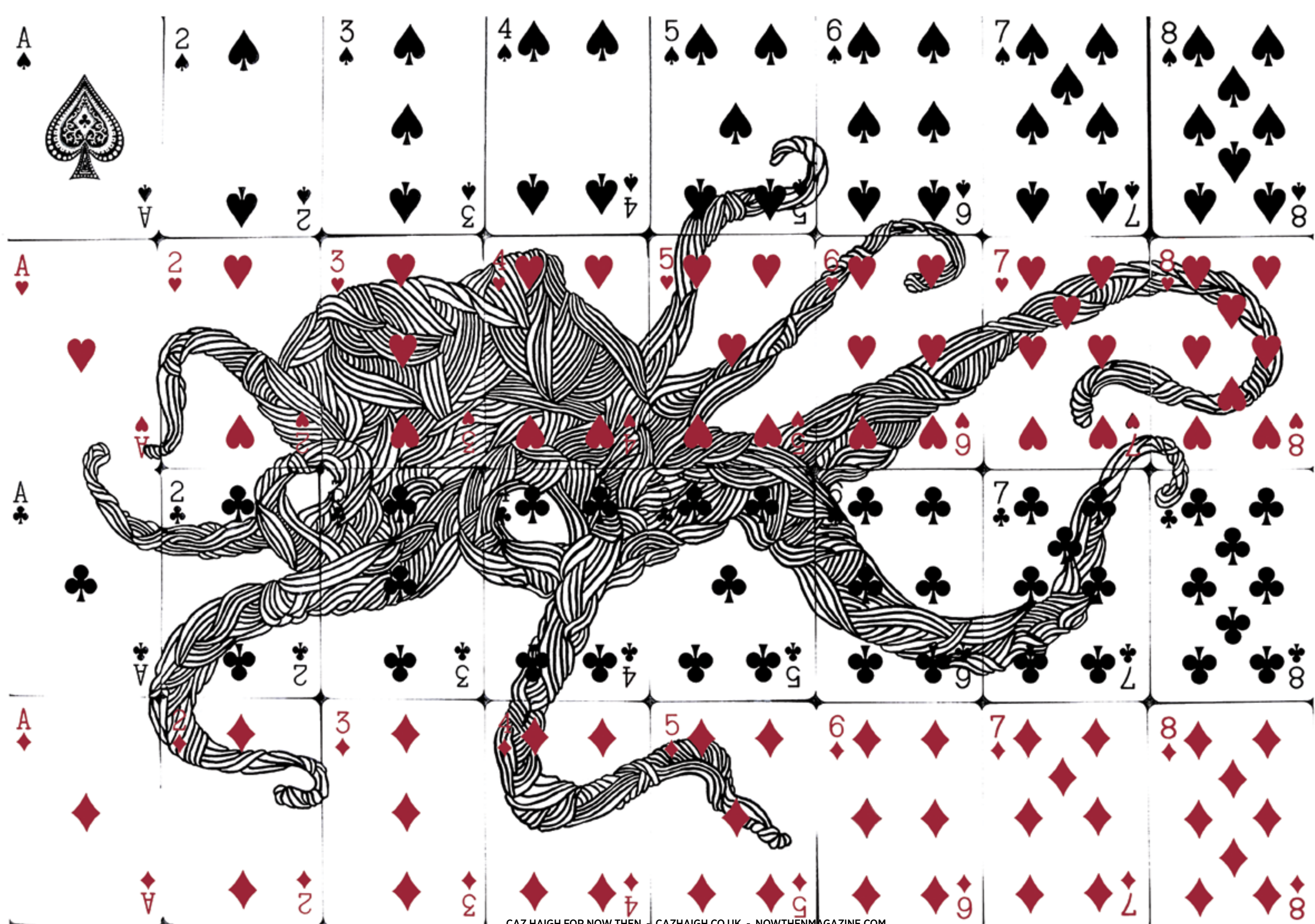


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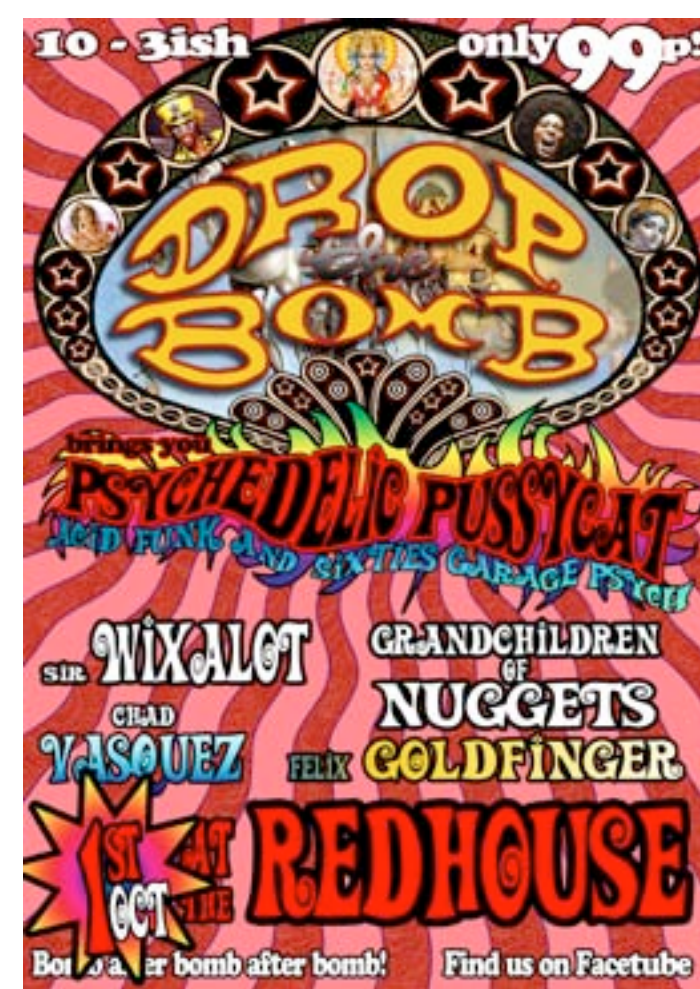
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THE TRIBUTE BAND.

WHY?

TOMMY BLANK.

Embracing recent observations that my articles are more often than not sardonic rants, I have once again commandeered the spotlight of sagacity and shone it toward the subject of celebrated imitation; the tribute act.

In a week where candid TV prankster Dom Jolly publicly vented his fury at the discovery of a Belgian rip-off Tragger Hippy TV [sic], clumsily and quite unashamedly trampling over every creative spark that has ever flown from his bonnet, this article could well be the very first example of yours truly writing something, I don't know, topical? A Kodak moment for my old Journalism lecturers I'm quite sure.

Sporting the same gags, sketches, locations and in some cases shot-for-shot identical production as Jolly's original creation Trigger Happy TV, the atrocious Flemish knock-off really is the most incredible example of idea poaching.

But it's not even that which bothers me so. Rather, it's the fact that shooting the phoney and no doubt shoddy version, editing it and producing it must have incurred great cost, effort and skill. When armed with such resources, why not create something new and reap the rewards on your own merit? It beggars belief.

That's as topical as it gets I'm afraid, because the focus of this tirade is far more sinister and far more likely to hit a sour note with a reader or two - unless by some sleight of hand my deliberations have picked up a niche following amongst idea-starved television producers in Bruges, in which case I'll postpone my annual visit to wove tapestries and throw myself off a bell tower out of boredom.

I can trace my distaste for cover songs back to my early school days. Coerced into repeatedly playing 'Good King Wenceslas' on my child-size acoustic guitar, I found myself pioneering ways to avoid committing such unjust crimes against the eardrum. This involved miming during live recitals as my parents glowed with misplaced pride. Sorry to publicly crush a dream, Mum, but you wouldn't have heard a single note plucked correctly had I not been clamping down tightly on the fretboard to prevent a single tuneless squeak escaping from my hallowed strings. I also spent years pumping pre-recorded tapes of myself practicing out of a cassette player while I read comics with the bedroom door ajar.

What did this King Wenceslas do to deserve such a favourable pseudonym as well as his own song? Why should I be paying him such respect through the medium of mime? Wenceslas was allegedly renowned for almsgiving; the practice of giving materially to those less fortunate as part of a religious virtue. Big whoop. That's comparable to those free Church barbecues, which are of course anything but free when you consider that you pay with both time and patience once inevitably accosted and subsequently bored to tears by a rather desperate clergyman trying to bolster the numbers at next Sunday's service.

I have meandered off topic here it seems. I digress.

So aged 12, with my feet up and deeply engrossed in Spiderman's latest caper while my parents sat downstairs duped into thinking I was recreating the works of Pavel Steidl, something must have stirred deep within me.

'If I'm not creating something new, what am I contributing? I'm just wasting my time.'

And this credos is still present today when, thirteen years on, I scrutinise flyers for line ups of bands soon to grace the stages of Sheffield's finest music venues.

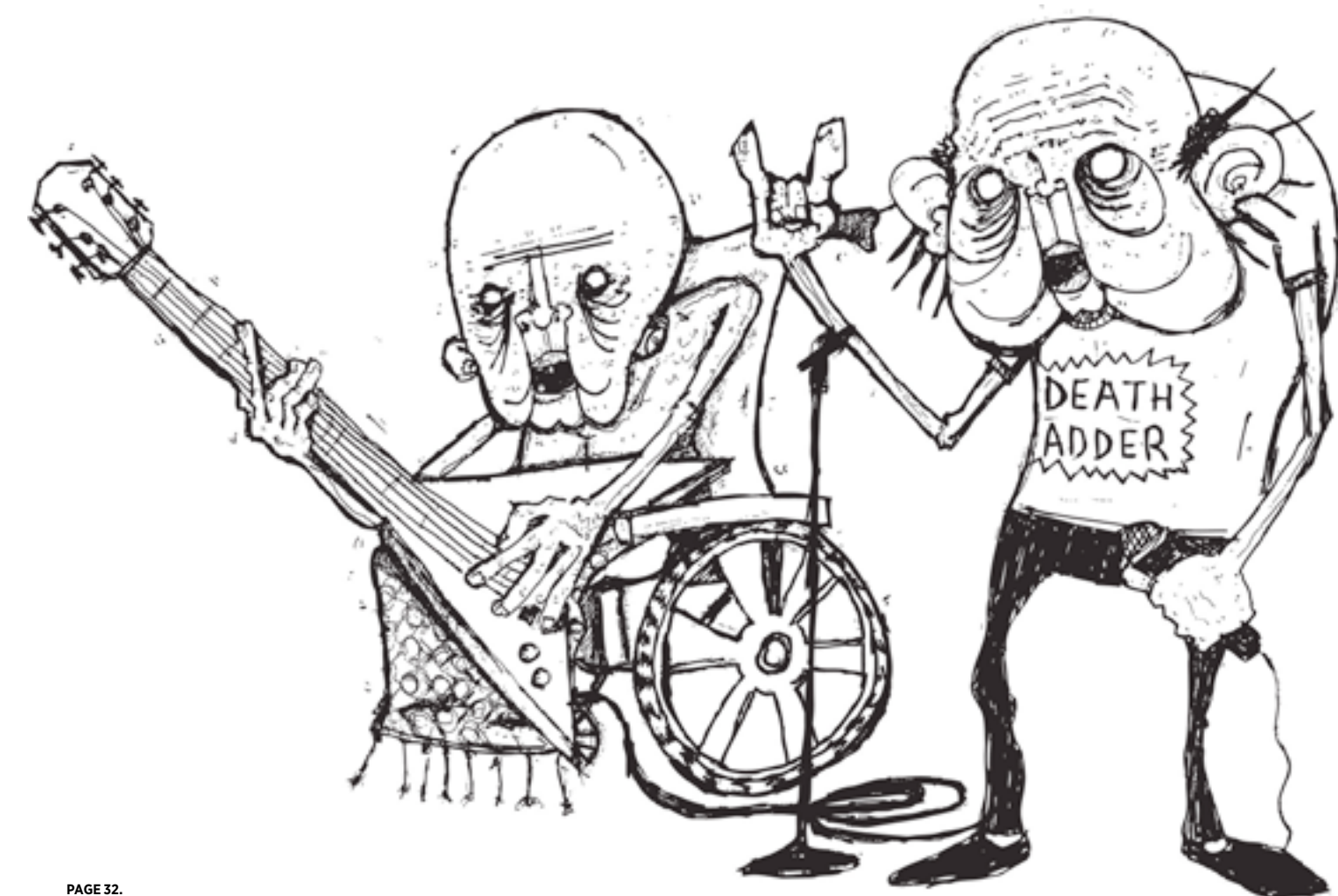
Whole Lotta Led. The Stone Roses Experience. Antarctic Monkeys. The list goes on.

With the obvious ability that is undeniably present among these professional musicians, I'm positively mystified as to why they didn't use the time it took to master someone else's back catalogue to instead write some songs of their own. I can categorically state that I would be far happier playing in a band who wrote their own songs that no one liked, than be part of a five-man cringe convoy en route to questionable reverence at the end of an hour-long covers set. And some of these battle-of-the-bands also-rans even dress up like their esteemed pin-ups, leaving me with no option but to make an informed assumption that they are almost definitely a spritely collection of rejects.

Returning to where the article began (say cheese Dr Clarke of Sheffield Hallam Journalism studies, you taught me that one), I suppose the underlying theme is the value of creativity over general ability. It takes some real smarts to write something truly great, and as Radiohead's Thom Yorke once sang, "Anyone can play guitar". Then again, he also said "Arrest this man he talks in maths and buzzes like a fridge", so take from that what you will.

But when the likelihood is that these (usually God awful) bands they are emulating will no doubt re-form, limping on stage wrinkled and decrepit for one final tour that should never have been, I have to pose the question to the tribute act - what's the fucking point?

For daily Twitter musings follow @tommyblank
Illustration by Jon Brown. Letters@jonathanbrown.org



LOUIS ROMEGOUX.

4TH AUGUST.
THE GRAPES.

REVIEWER – JAMES LOCK.

Penned as ‘my ACTUAL last gig’, I was happy to make the effort to go and see one of Sheffield’s premier singer-songwriters perform one last time. Supporting Louis at the Grapes tonight was Chris Murphy & Boxer Genius. While perhaps not being the most inspiring of supports, Murphy and his band played tightly and with precision, his soaring vocals not missing a note throughout.

But it was clear to see that the crowd was here for one man only. Louis opened with ‘Shadows’, unbelievably written when he was 17, illustrating what a natural talent was at this young man’s fingertips. Throughout his set, amidst the vocal highs and eerie melancholy strings, was an appreciative silence, as if each member of the crowd had attached their own personal woes or stories to his songs.

Tonight was a perfect testament to a man who has spent the last five years gigging relentlessly around Sheffield’s bars and cafes. A true troubadour. Good luck on your distant shores, Louis Romegoux.

THIRSTY EAR MEET
SEQUOIA SOUNDSYSTEM.

7TH AUGUST.
THE HARLEY.

REVIEWER – JAMES LOCK.

Having spent the last few hours tramping around West St and Division St, surrounded by hordes of weekend zombies, walking into the Harley was a little like finding fresh water in the desert.

Tonight Sequoia and Thirsty Ear residents were going back to back and as I watched the Harley quickly become rammed it was clear that here was a mutually appreciated oasis of good feeling.

I’ll be honest and say right now I didn’t last through to the 3am finish. I did, however, have the unique joy (as I’m sure many of you did) of watching Sequoia’s Baba G play an electro swing set with such exuberance and raw pleasure that you couldn’t beat the smile off my face. Bring on the first Saturday of the month slot and Thirsty Ear(s) all round.

A HAWK AND A HACKSAW.

5TH AUGUST.
HARLEY.

REVIEWER – SAM WALBY.

A Hawk and a Hacksaw appear at the Harley as part of a short tour of the UK, bringing in a decent crowd for a mid-week event and keeping them on their toes throughout.

Opening for them tonight is Sheffield’s own Big Eyes Family Players, who peddle a kind of cinematic, evocative form of folk. Headed by James Green, they begin with more downtempo numbers, coaxing out the weirdness with peculiar bass scales and embellished chords as the room begins to fill up.

Most people arrive in time for the end of the Big Eyes set, however, because they’re here for the main event. A Hawk and a Hacksaw hail from Zuzax, New Mexico and don’t reach these shores too often, so it only stands to reason the indie crew turns out in droves. Founded by Jeremy Barnes and Heather Trost after various visits to Europe, the band is strongly rooted in Eastern and particularly Balkan traditions. Most tracks have a marching pace and more notes than you can count, boasting an arrogant, drunken swagger that immediately creates an atmosphere in the room.

Equipped with accordion, violin, mandolin, percussion and other such instruments, they thrash through gypsy romps with confident and clinical precision, driven by the near-virtuosic abilities of Trost and Barnes. The violin regularly takes the lead, delivering quickfire melodies over minor-key chord changes. The percussionist is utterly astounding. They rarely settle on a single passage for long, instead shifting into new rhythms and time signatures without warning.

But this stop/start nature comes at the cost of dynamics, which are all too absent throughout. Even fans would be hard pressed to distinguish some songs from each other, since almost all have a similar tone and urgency. Coupled with a static stage demeanour, the show at times borders on boring, which is surprising considering the technicality involved in its performance.

The keen way in which everyone in the room shifts and stretches to see what’s going on when Trost brings out a horn violin is a fair indication of the curiosity of the band as a whole. They are well versed in the appropriation and assimilation of foreign traditions and this provides much of their appeal, but sometimes the music needs a larger dose of originality than that which is administered tonight.

TOOTS AND THE MAYTALS.

14TH JULY.
ACADEMY.

REVIEWER - TOMMY BLANK.

For anyone with even a slight interest in reggae, or any of the genres heavily influenced by the movement, the opportunity to see some of the founders of the genre in one’s own back yard is one not to be missed. For me and the several hundred soggy bohemians that descended on the Academy on a dreary evening in Sheffield, there was no event taking place in the steel city as deserving of such anticipation.

Still going since the early Sixties, Toots and the Maytals are credited with the first use of the word reggae in a song; ‘Do the Reggay’. They are responsible for anthems such as ‘Monkey Man’ (famously covered by The Specials), ‘Pressure Drop’ and ‘54-46 Was My Number’.

Supported by the warm and vibrant tones of Sheffield’s own Dubcentral DJs and a fresh and charmingly daring performance from local ska collective Banana Flavoured Dub Cats, The Maytals eventually took to the stage to nothing less than a roar.

It didn’t take very long to establish that Frederick ‘Toots’ Hibbert may be pushing seventy (seriously) but by no stretch of the imagination has he lost the ability to blow the roof off with his surprisingly agile on-stage antics and more specifically, his voice.

Soul-penetratingly bold, scratchy and insanely cool, Toots stands up as one of the greatest living vocalists to grace the microphone. If I didn’t know any better I’d have clumsily waited for a quiet moment in a song to proclaim the similarities to the late great James Brown.

But judging from the crowd’s keyed up reactions to the anthems dotted amidst the set, the lion’s share of the revellers present wanted more Kingston stylings than Toots et al were willing to provide. Granted, The Maytals historically span the genres as well as the generations, but the order of the day was reggae, and they somewhat failed to heed this call.

There were just too many sing-it-back-to-me’s, solo vocal breakdowns and overall showboating for this gig to avoid the sad typicality of just another band who should have called it quits five albums ago. And without a brass instrument in sight, what unfolded on stage before me just didn’t quite cut the honey-mustard.

Throughout the performance they toed the line between eclectic and erratic, unloading passé acoustic strum numbers and rocky album fillers on their audience that were as irrefutably forgettable as they were lengthy.

When they played ska and reggae they nailed it, but there just wasn’t enough to hold my full attention. And, hoping that the use of the phrase ‘minimal reggae’ doesn’t inspire a horrible new electronic genre, I have to say that I left rather disenchanted and with an unfulfilled hunger only DJ Derek’s antique gramophone could satisfy.

For Toots himself, the fire most certainly hasn’t gone out, but perhaps it’s time he hung up his leather vest and let his records to do the talking.

DEAR JOHN /
LUXURY STRANGER /
THE HUDARES /
VAGRANT KING.

19TH AUGUST.
PENELOPE’S.

REVIEWER – BEN JACKSON.

In the pissing rain of the great British summer, this ace little venue on Arundel Gate had its work cut out in drawing a crowd tonight, but given the conditions did remarkably well. Tonight’s line up saw a daring mix of musical styles, an apparent hotch-potch of acts that, for the most part, complimented each other surprisingly well.

First to let fly were Dear John and having been drafted in last minute to fill for a no-show, they took to it like they’d been booked for weeks. Their set starter suggested that we may be in for an opening of grand vocal lines in the Pearl Jam vein but was followed by a slice of rockabilly rawk that showed a breadth and depth of understanding of both their influences and instruments. They continued to dabble in different styles with post rock, epic vocals being the main theme. By the end they had been accepted by the audience as tight as you like but, at least tonight, no moulds were being broken.

Then came Luxury Stranger. Perhaps the most detestable gang of pricks this reviewer has ever encountered, this band epitomised ‘style’ over substance. They served nothing but tedious, over egged plod-rock throughout, with affected postulation taking the place of anything interesting and vocals like a bad impression of Billy Idol. There was pretension abound, from the female audience prop ‘filming’ the abortion in contrived contortions, to the front man’s Robert Smith-meets-Kiss costume. Their bandanna clad following rocking the shades indoors look summed them up perfectly. Beyond parody.

Mercifully, next up came the perfect antidote in the form of the Hudares. This powerful and anthemic Brit rock act really mean it and are clearly all about the tunes, with two fingers held squarely in the face of the fashion parade. The minute they growled out their opener the crowd swelled with appreciation at being given licence to let go, in stark contrast to the shuffle-footed ego flexers that preceded them. Every song banged out with vigour and purpose (to the point that the lead singer’s face had turned a healthy shade of beetroot at the close of the set) and a flow of self-effacing patter, they couldn’t have been better received. It is clear that they were four lads at a time in British music that came just before the clothes took centre stage over the music. Just the tonic.

Last up and an hour later than billed were the wonderfully affable and enthusiastic Vagrant King. Despite the now dwindling crowd and the daunting task of following such a strong act, these chaps played like they were in a stadium, with some lovely blues rock and a jaunty offbeat rhythm that endeared them to the remaining revellers.

A minor blip in the middle but overall Penelope’s delivered once again.

SOUND.

LUKE ABBOTT. LIZ RYDER.

WOMEN. KIDKUT. FUNKINEVEN.

LUKE ABBOTT.

**HOLKHAM DRONES.
BORDER COMMUNITY.**

REVIEWER – BEN DOREY.



Electronica producer Luke Abbott, already acclaimed for his work remixing other artists in a distinctive analogue style, makes his first full-length album release on Border Community this month. Following in the footsteps of Caribou, Four Tet and Nathan Fake, he traces a line between melodic krautrock influences and the softer side of acid techno, deftly demonstrating an awareness of the merits of both vintage and modern influences in sound production. The result is a refreshingly human sounding album of electronica which moves you predominantly through good old fashioned harmonies, though the rhythmical side of the music isn't something to sniff at either.

Opener '2nd 5th Heavy' sets things off with warm flurries of synth melodies gradually weaving themselves into ever-grander structures over a simple backbone of kick-snare beats. Think of a hybrid of Sigur Rós and Tangerine Dream and you might get a vague idea. This leads us into 'Swansong', a track that begins with the crisp minimalism of Berlin techno but soon evolves into haunting and unresolving detuned analogue fuzziness with not insubstantial overtones of Boards of Canada. From here on a 4/4 backbone remains as the acid influences gain momentum.

'Whitebox' exemplifies this more modern side of Abbott's sound, with complex arrangements of affected synths swelling into the abrupt and arresting entry of a razor sharp acid lead, which in turn cuts a meditative path through the rapid rhythmic oscillations hinted at in the introduction. This is neatly produced music with an innate danceability that does nothing to detract from the pleasure it emits through a set of headphones. The title track is similar, having a strong basic chord progression and steady rhythm that provide it with dancefloor credentials but also hold a great deal of interest on repeat listens due to the subtle but complex manipulation of the basic structure, and an introduction of psychedelia via groaning samples and waves of static.

Other standout tracks include 'Trans Forest Alignment' - an unnerving exploration into a world of detuned synths, delicately poised between traditional harmony and discordance, 'Soft Attacks' - a dreamy construction of swelling synth voices which again hovers on the borders between classical beauty and something altogether more unsettling, and penultimate track 'Dumb' - a beatless piece which sensitively explores unusual timbres of electronic sound in a way that will excite music theory buffs.

All in all, this is a strong record for a debut and displays the breadth of Abbott's talents admirably. If you like your music catchy or conspicuously complicated then this might not float your boat, but some songs will leave a lasting impression on anyone with open ears.

LIZ RYDER.

**GHOST LETTERS FROM THE SEA.
SELF-RELEASED.
MYSpace.COM/LIZRYDER**
REVIEWER – SAM WALBY.



Although she was born and now lives in California, Liz Ryder grew up over here and spent some of her life in Sheffield, establishing a following on the folk circuit before heading over the Atlantic to new pastures. But she hasn't lost the love of the country, a fact that 'Shropshire' attests to with style. **Ghost Letters from the Sea** is the follow-up to 2003's **On The Neon Highway** and a string of EPs. Strumming away on her guitar or plucking at her harp, the 29-year-old creates a hazy, rural interpretation of folk ideal for lazy Sunday listening.

Ryder's approach is ultimately traditional and therefore a little limited, but that doesn't stop her making it her own. 'Lightning Makes Glass' is based on a stilted contrapuntal harp arrangement that throws you out of time, supported by eerie backing vocals and a tale telling the power of the natural world. 'Butterfly' and 'Cannonfire' showcase her technical ability on the guitar and the range of her voice well, the former using an open tuning to open up the fret board. One of the best moments is the (more or less) a cappella 'Cruel War', a plea for a lover to return home from battle. Also enjoyable is 'Three Ravens', an old English folk ballad done by the likes of Bert Jansch and Richard Thompson.

'Ray of Light' is not a Madonna cover, but a jaunty and countrified pop tune with added catchiness.

Ghost Letters from the Sea invites inevitable but perhaps flattering comparisons to performers like Joni Mitchell and Joanna Newsom. This album will be well received by all the folkies out there and would be great to hear performed live, but on record it doesn't often outdo the label 'good'.



WOMEN.

**PUBLIC STRAIN.
JAGJAGUWAR.**

REVIEWER – ALEX TURNER.



Canadian foursome Women's self-titled debut long-player was a strange and frustrating beast. By turns discordant and borderline twee, it fell awkwardly between two stools; neither fey enough for those craving straight-up indie jangles, nor packing sufficient teeth to really grab the noise-lover. However, it carried just enough songwriting meat on its fuzzy, spindly frame to make for a reasonably diverting half-hour.

The press for the follow-up, **Public Strain**, is keen to point out the advances that the band have made in the interim, talking up the "balance of delicate and dense" and "undeniable voice" that they have hit upon. It's got to be said, the openings of the two albums could hardly be more different. **Women** started proceedings with 'Cameras', a jaunty synth-powered number, whereas its successor perversely kicks off with the hypnotic, cello-laden dirge 'Can't You See'.

For two-thirds of its length, Public Strain tacks restlessly back and forth between such slower-paced efforts and spikier fare. In doing so, it brandishes a series of classical art-rock touchstones that pretty much insist you take notice of them. 'Narrow With The Hall' emerges from a burst of feedback into a woozy, Velvetsy strum, while 'Drag Open' effectively tries on the garments of several periods of Sonic Youth and, slightly more intriguingly, 'Untogether' offers up a gloomy melody recalling 1980-issue New Order.

This isn't to say that the album quite crosses the line into cabaret. The thin, trebly production and Patrick Flegel's hushed vocal stylings give Women's sound some useful anchors, albeit ones that may turn off as many listeners as they appeal to. And there are some lovely contrasting moments, such as the desolate trudge of 'Penal Colony' and the pulsing 'China Steps'. But, as with the band's first effort, it ends up a slightly uneven listen that fails to really seize the attention, even after several plays.

All this might add up to a straightforward, faint-praise dismissal were it not for the quality that gets rolled out during the last few tracks. 'Locust Valley' suddenly drops into a gorgeous descending melody, while 'Venice Lockjaw' surfs a languidly narcotic guitar figure. Set closer 'Eyesore' finally nails the tension missing from the rest of the album, its relatively jagged opening begun with a long, chiming fade. If this is what Women are capable of when they relax, stop dicking about and just get on with writing some tunes, then perhaps next time they'll knock out something a little more satisfying.

KIDKUT.

**ILOVE04 / LILT
APPLE PIPS.**

REVIEWER – JACK OPUS.



No Nonsense bass music from Kidkut this month on Appleblim's Apple Pips label. Title track 'ILove04' takes the 'less is more' approach, creating an instant drum break and tough bassline classic of which I'm a huge fan, utilising an 808 State sample in the breakdown and a catchy 'I want you' vocal sample to great effect.

I'm indifferent to 'Lilt' - tight production, but not enough to keep me coming back for more. The whole track feels a bit too reliant on the loops it is constructed from and as a result becomes boring to the ear relatively quickly.

This release is highly recommended for 'ILove04', which is a good example of forthcoming releases from this camp. Watch out for labelmates Arkisist and Al Tourettes, who both shone when I caught them in the Apple Pips room at Metalheadz a few months back.

FUNKINEVEN.

**HEARTPOUND / ANOTHER SPACE.
EGLO RECORDS.**

REVIEWER – MALCOLM HAMILTON.



Continuing its trend of releasing an eclectic mix of music, Eglo Records provides us with Funkineven's latest offering. A-side 'Heartpress' infuses acid and nods to hardcore with its piano stabs. It seemed apparent to me before reading the press release that Funkineven hails from West London due to the similarity to the dancefloor-orientated beat work of people like Seiji and the vocal style of 4 Hero. However, it's the vocal that lets this track down - enough to prevent me from coming back to an otherwise interesting tune.

'Another Space' is the stronger of the two tracks - again touching on early rave with some of the sounds used. The flavour of the track is definitely an acquired taste but maintains a unique and fresh musical approach, despite drawing on sounds from eras been and gone.

In my opinion not the strongest release on this mighty fine label, but I can see others disagreeing. Fortunately for Eglo they have a wide variety of styles, so there should be something for everyone.

BEN FROST.

BY THE THROAT EXPLAINED.

INTERVIEW BY SAM WALBY.

Back in March last year (Now Then issue 12), we featured an interview with Valgeir Sigurðsson, Icelandic producer and head of the Bedroom Community label based in Reykjavik. Now it is the turn of perhaps that label's most successful artist. Ben Frost came to the attention of most with the claustrophobic, crackling static of 2007's **Theory of Machines**, setting himself apart from other producers with a near-unique blend of industrial, ambient, noise and electronica. It was a raging success, receiving almost unanimous praise, and was followed by the primal **By The Throat** two years later, an unnerving panorama of texture and shape that fractured its predecessor's blueprint and reassembled the pieces. Listening to By The Throat is a visceral and internal experience. Don't expect to feel the joy of life as it pulsates through your brain and rattles your bones. You are more likely to be a bit scared. Don't expect choruses and overproduced beats. There is melody but sometimes you have to search for it. Call it avant-garde if you want to be pretentious about it.

Ben's live shows have become world-renowned for their sheer volume and deep sub frequencies, and he was recently accepted onto a mentoring scheme with Brian Eno. This speaks volumes for his progression as an artist in the last few years and for his bright future, which includes rescoring Andrei Tarkovsky's *Solaris* and writing the soundtrack to online multiplayer horror game *World of Darkness*. Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you a man of few words...

How would you describe what you do to someone who hasn't heard your music?

A slow motion shark attack.

Did anything in particular inspire the use of more animalistic themes on By the Throat?

I started listening to a lot of New Age relaxation music - music designed to invoke this kind of G-rated version of the natural world. I found it really offensive. Nature is nothing like that - you know, whale recordings mixed with some kind of Vangelis synth bullshit. By The Throat is the opposite of that.

How did your creative methods change when writing the album and how would you compare it to Theory of Machines?

By The Throat is the Empire Strikes Back of my catalogue.

In a more technical sense, how did you record the album and who performed on it?

I am very fortunate to be surrounded by a wide network of musicians who sort of gravitate to our studio in Reykjavik for their own reasons and inevitably get tangled up in my business while they are there. If things work in our initial messing about, it usually turns into another round of more focussed work with that person. In the case of the bass player Borgar Magnason it's turned into a pretty involved extended exploration of his work through my music that has lasted years. It's exciting to work with someone that closely for that long and to push things into uncharted territory.

How do you approach playing your music live? Is there any adaptation or improv involved?

Of course there is improvisation involved. I am not a robot. Live music should feel dangerous. If it doesn't, I am not doing it right.

You recently got accepted as 'music protégé' on the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative. How did this come about?

I was nominated to work with Brian Eno, suffice to say I accepted and am very excited.

Is there any chance of a collaborative recording with Eno, or him producing your next album? Or will his help be more theoretical/advisory?

The short answer is I have no idea at the moment, but I imagine it will be broader than any one specific project. That is kind of too easy, I think.

Tell us a bit about the World of Darkness soundtrack project and when it will see the light of day.

That game is in a scale of huge that is beyond comprehension. I have no idea when it will actually be launched, but the research continues. My theory is they are secretly waiting for vampires to become unfashionable again. The soundtrack is an ongoing process.

Why did you choose to re-score Tarkovsky's Solaris and do you have any plans to record it?

I hated the score for the original film - very didactic and uninteresting to me. It will be recorded later this year and probably released in the spring of 2011.

If you were commissioned to invent a form of musical torture, what would it be?

I would say keep the money. Just walk into your local HMV, you will find all you need right there.

myspace.com/theghostofbenfrost

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EDINBURGH FESTIVAL.

A QUICK ROUNDUP.

JOE KRISS.

EDINBURGH FESTIVAL IS THE BIGGEST ARTS FESTIVAL ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD. STARTED IN 1947, IT PULLS ENOUGH PEOPLE TO TRIPLE THE NORMAL POPULATION OF THE CITY. IT’S INCREDIBLY INFECTIOUS, AND COMBINED WITH STREET PERFORMERS, FLYERERS, BOOZE AND THE GENERAL MADNESS OF PEOPLE CONSTANTLY CROSSING THE WIDTH OF THE CITY TO SEE ONE OF THE THOUSANDS OF DIFFERENT SHOWS ON THAT DAY, IT FEELS UNLIKE ANY OTHER FESTIVAL IN THE WORLD. ENCOMPASSING SEVERAL DIFFERENT MEDIUMS - BE IT DANCE, THEATRE, MUSIC, SPOKEN WORD, COMEDY OR THE MILITARY TATTOO - THERE IS ALWAYS SOMETHING ON OFFER FOR EVERYBODY.

But its strength is also its biggest weakness. Its broad range and open access policy (with a bit of cash theres nothing stopping anyone debuting a show at the fringe) mean the quality of the shows is extremely variable. From the standards of **My Romantic History** about to open at the Crucible to school musicals, you could walk into a piece of genius or your worst nightmare. Shows aren’t cheap either, averaging at £9 for most of the fringe shows with some of the high profile comedy performers coming in at a lot more.

First up, comedy. Arriving on Thursday evening we caught **David O’Doherty**’s second night at the Fringe. His show follows typical observationalist humour and features confessional tales punctuated by a Casio keyboard from which he sings songs about how to fix bicycles and failed romantic relationships. Although an amusing and likeable show with good moments, it never really seemed to reach a point and coasted along at a steady pace without breaking into speed.

Next up was **Edwards and Stubbings: The Late Show** which promised ‘stand-up comedy from two rising stars of the circuit’. Adopting stereotypes of ‘loose women’ quickly degenerated into shock tactics and did nothing to subvert them. It was like watching Germaine Greer’s dystopian nightmare. Feminist ideals aside, it wasn’t funny and only got a few ripples of laughter from the drunks at the back of the backpackers hostel it was situated in. Ross Sutherland’s debut show **The Three Stigmata of Pacman**, on the other hand, was one of the shows that saved my experience of the Fringe this year. Skillfully blending multimedia, comedy, poetry and music, Sutherland created an engaging and stimulating show. Performed confidently, directly addressing the audience with autobiographical material and startling honesty.

The Big Smoke was another good production, a one woman show inspired by the writings of Sylvia Plath. The narrator heads the way of Plath’s protagonist in The Bell Jar. Not good. But great writing, amazing performance from a single performer switching effortlessly between voice and song.

Stop, Look Listen was a piece of new writing by Elizabeth Gaubert. The play explored the changing dynamics of society when confronted with extreme situations by following the voices of a whole community. It was well acted throughout and although sometimes the transitions between characters seemed a little jumpy, the play was an engaging and thought provoking discussion of what holds communities together.

Another Someone fused movement, music and good writing to explore the lives of three young people in the same apartment block. Subtle, honest writing coupled with great theatrical moments that created a real poignancy.

Last up is **The Cry**, which follows the story of Palestinian poet Ghazi Hussein, who has been incarcerated 23 times throughout his life and tortured because of his political beliefs. The play follows monologues by the poet interspersed with scenes of torture. The actor playing the poet by the end of the show was bleeding out of several sores on his back, and had experienced several minutes of water boarding. Although horrific and shoking, the repetition in this piece brings it down, it becomes too uncomfortable, which is perhaps the point.

Edinburgh Festival is an amazing event. It maintains the atmosphere of a music festival throughout the entire city for a month. There are bars and small venues that pop up everywhere and beyond the theatre there is a whole range of music events that happen across the city. From jazz to techno, dance to comedy, whatever your taste, some of the best artists and performers in the arts and creative communities ply their trade in Edinburgh in August. Even when the performances aren’t great, the atmosphere makes you feel the potential that you’ll be surprised by something you see. Sometimes you will be.

METROPOLIS. DIRECTOR - FRITZ LANG (1927).

REVIEWER – SARA HILL.

26,000 male extras, 11,000 female extras, 750 child extras, 750 bit players and of course the actual cast. No, it’s not the latest James Cameron epic. In fact it’s not even a ‘talkie’. Fritz Lang’s Metropolis is nonetheless more epic than anything the esteemed Mr Cameron has produced, a German expressionist science fiction masterpiece full of startling imagery depicting a harrowing vision of a dystopian urban future.

The city of Metropolis is ruled from the ‘New Tower of Babel’ by Joh Fredersen, its architect. The surface is a beautiful, clean world of fantastical gardens and sophisticated offices populated by the management. The depths, naturally, tell a different story, where the numbered workers, stripped of their humanity, are so tied to the machines that they become frantic living components. We meet the workers through the eyes of the naïve and pampered child of the city’s master, Freder, who was previously unaware of the price of his luxury. So far so Marxist, yes?

The workers are indeed rallying to the lovely Maria, who has given them hope and preaches peaceful discussion between the classes; “the mediator between head and hand must be the heart”. She believes the mediator has come in the form of our wandering Prince, who fell in love with her at first sight. Unfortunately for them, the inventor Rotwang has an agenda of his own and a solution to this human worker problem, the Machine Man, and he will give it Maria’s face. Then everything really kicks off. Enter the whore of Babylon, “this woman at whose feet all sins are heaped”.

Metropolis is performed as a melodrama, a style necessary to portray the story and characters without dialogue. To modern viewers who are unaccustomed to this it may appear ridiculous or cartoonish, but the atmosphere it creates is unique and combines elements of pantomime, drama, dance and theatre. It is utterly fantastical and yet thematically, chillingly real.

The storyline will tread familiar ground for most, although this is one of its first incarnations in cinema, and a black and white silent film isn’t for everyone. For me, one of the (many) stand-out qualities is its consistent and meticulous attention to detail. Nothing is accidental. From the inverted pentagram above the chair of the Machine Man, to the perfectly choreographed movements of the workers on shift, through the hints of Ancient Greek culture in the activities of the young men at the start of the film. The range of influences drawn together by this film is surpassed only by the range of films that have drawn influence from it.

As if all that weren’t enough, following its German release in January 1927, the film was heavily cut for the American debut two months later. Portions were subsequently lost, damaged or destroyed, but in 2008 a near-complete print was found languishing in a film museum in Buenos Aires. Following authentication and restoration in Germany a new version, the closest ever to Fritz Lang’s original, will be released in September. This is a cinephile’s wet dream and if you’ve never see a silent film before, this is the one.

Watch Metropolis at the Showroom Cinema from 10th September - more details at showroomworkstation.org.uk.

FILMREEL.

METROPOLIS. INCEPTION.

INCEPTION. DIRECTOR - CHRISTOPHER NOLAN (2010).

REVIEWER - OWEN COGAN.

I remember watching Memento and thinking it was a bit of a gimmick and watching The Dark Knight and being bored by its ceaseless vacuous action scenes, so despite the glowing reviews, it was with trepidation that I made my way to see Christopher Nolan’s new film Inception. In reality there was nothing to worry about - this film is as good as everyone makes out and if you have yet to experience the clammy, unnerving exhilaration of its mad genius, you should probably make time. The fact that the film is such an overwhelming and involving spectacle means you really should see it on a big screen with a fat sound system rather than on your Macbook.

Inception is an action movie, a heist movie which takes place in the most intriguing and disturbing of all possible settings - the human mind. And not in the dull arena of the conscious mind with its repressed desires and its muffled fears, but in the cacophonous, hallucinatory battlefield of the subconscious.

Leonardo DiCaprio plays Cobb, a man skilled in entering the dreaming minds of his victims and stealing their secrets. Cobb’s job is to literally inhabit the subconscious mind of an individual and roam around their projected dream world looking for what his client needs to know. His wife is dead and he is separated from his children, and the crux of Inception’s plot is that to get back to his kids Cobb must perform the impossibly difficult and dangerous task, not of taking an idea from a victim’s subconscious but of planting one there.

Inception is a high budget blockbuster and as such does not escape a few too many overlong chase scenes and needless special effects, but unlike most Hollywood affairs it does escape being a farcical, mindless parody of art. Inception is a great because of Christopher Nolan’s astonishing manipulation and extension of the action movie medium. Nolan has such a new take on the genre. He pushes everything so far with such creativity, intelligence and literacy that you will be astonished by the film’s originality. A striking achievement considering the action genre is the most worn out genre in existence. Inception explores the mind, its relation to reality, its depth and its irrationality; it explores the psychotic’s complete withdrawal from reality and the neurotic’s partial escape. Nolan’s film sinks into the irrational otherworldly forces of the subconscious which govern our lives like a youth sinking into a K-hole and the experience is as equally disorientating. This is clever, insightful and disturbing filmmaking, an accessible contemporary surrealist portrait that leaves you exhilarated.

VERYPC.

VERY-PC.CO.UK

If you're not up on your cutting edge IT, then it is very possible you may not have heard of VeryPC.

However, if by chance of thought you were to ask yourself 'Who makes the most energy efficient computers in the world?', your journey would lead you to a mid-sized manufacturing unit off Penistone Road in Sheffield. Then, my friends, you would know the name VeryPC.

Established in Sheffield in 2004, VeryPC remains in the city of its creation and is proud to still be manufacturing here. Having been awarded the 'Made in Sheffield' mark in 2007, VeryPC have been accumulating international awards at a steady pace. In 2009, they won a special award for 'Outstanding Contribution to Sustainable IT', which was a one-off given especially for their long-term commitment to carbon reduction. VeryPC also do 'mad, crazy' things like plant a tree in the Caledonian forest for every GreenPC purchased between 2005 and 2009. They also use 81% less embedded carbon than most normal PCs, and an average of 26 watts per computer as opposed to the industry standard of 114.7 watts. The final tip of the hat comes when you learn that from manufacture to distribution, VeryPC components travel from Hull to Sheffield to Harrogate - a firm improvement on that easy jet to China and back.

VeryPC use the latest technologies to provide performance upgrades and as well as being energy efficient, they are dual and quad core machines capable of meeting the demands of the modern home and workplace. They are also now members of the WWF business club, supporting WWF projects in the rainforests.

This year VeryPC became one of the first companies to replace PCs with the Big Business Refit, an equipment scrappage scheme run by the Carbon Trust. The initiative is aimed at small-to-medium-sized businesses and offers government funded loans to companies wanting to replace their computers with more energy efficient ones. In real terms this will save at least 2.5 tonnes of CO2 emissions per £1,000 borrowed. The beauty of the scheme is that it is designed so companies are able to pay off the 0% interest loan with the money they have saved in energy consumption as a result of the new hardware - once more proving the point that the environment and the economy need not always be at odds.

Blue Box IT, The Stables, Townend Lane, Deepcar, S36 2TS
BothRealities Ltd, Unit 5 Parkwood Business Park, S3 8AL
Datamills, 24 Tadcaster Road, S8 0RB
Clearbase Solutions, Globeworks, Penistone Road, S6 3AE
Highlander, Systems House, Shepcote S9 1TG



THE YORK.

243-247 FULWOOD RD. BROOMHILL.
0114 2688061.

Sheffield has a new pub and one that's had quite a bit of effort put into it. We thought we'd share what we knew. The York in Broomhill closed earlier this year and is being reopened this month by the same folk who run the Forum, the Common Room and the Old House on Division St. But the York is to be a completely different beast to its counterparts in town, with a focus on the traditional pub, local produce and a full bar of ale.

The York was originally a blacksmiths-cum-travellers' inn dating back to the early 1800s. Later it was converted into a hotel with a pub on the ground floor. The all-new York aims to recreate this atmosphere of bygone times, with Victorian-inspired decor and a whole host of bric-a-brac, referencing the prior uses of the property.

The new owners have a keen eye on the food as well, with everything made fresh on site from local suppliers, keeping the carbon footprint light and monies in the local community. They also have the rather innovative addition of making their own bread, preservatives and owning their own smokehouse, of all things.

Considering the green focus of this month's Now Then, we asked this new venture how they would be doing their bit for the environment and the answer was certainly one to our liking. Forum Cafe Bars Ltd are already working with the Carbon Trust and have made a whole host of green precautions - using energy-saving light bulbs, recycling all their glass, installing waterless urinals and better insulated fridges to name but a few. They are also contributing to a scheme to plant trees in the Amazon. More like it, we say.

So if you're at a loose end in September and fancy a pint in a new boozer from the past, glazed Victorian tiles all, then we'd recommend a visit to the York in Broomhill. You'll find it on our map (back cover).

THE BYRON HOUSE. 16 NETHER EDGE ROAD, S7.

The footy season is now well and truly underway, having seemed so distant in the wake of our national team's abysmal performance in South Africa this summer. One place in which both the staff and regulars have been champing at the bit for the action to commence is the Byron House in Nether Edge. The Byron is about as dedicated a football pub as you're likely to find anywhere. A screen wherever you turn, info on the upcoming fixtures and coverage as soon as you walk in and constant chatter from the would-be managers on every stool. Landlord John has recently gone all-out and installed the area's first 3D big screen for the Premiership's big game clashes. Only two quid refundable deposit on your specs, whatever your colours. See you there.

SPOILT FOR CHOICE. 432 ECCLESALL ROAD, S11. 0114 266 1666.

It is highly likely that you have already visited this little stand-out eatery at the heart of Eccy Rd. If so, it is equally likely that you have been going back there ever since for their genuinely special 'Specials' and unrivalled standards. We are not here to preach to the choir, but to let you all know about Jim and his dedicated team of sarnie specialists' bold new plans. Due to the successes of the Spoilt for Choice cafe, the near future will see the launch of the corporate (not like that) side of the business, bringing their range of wares to your office, function or party. You can find out more by phoning, clicking or popping by in person before 3pm on any weekday. Finally, we issue the 'Sod Costa when there's far better coffee over the road' challenge to all the city's coffee lovers. You'll never look back.

COVER VERSIONS. A MONTH OF SUNDAYS GALLERY. 356 SHARROW VALE ROAD, S11.

Mr Pete McKee and his deft telling of the common story through both bleak and nostalgic cartoonery has long since established itself as part of our city's artistic landscape and, since early July, has found a home on Sharrow Vale Road. This cosy and intimate gallery space will this month be hosting a collaborative exhibition by many of Sheffield's creative folk of various disciplines, centring on the idea of the LP cover and its potential as a canvas to represent what that record means to the artist. Be it a redrawing of the cover, a homage to the lyrics or a pictorial representation of the record's impact on them, there will be pieces on show from the likes of Richard Hawley and Ian Anderson (Designers Republic), as well as firm Now Then favourites Kid Acne and Martin Bedford, among many others. The exhibition will run from 11th September until 14th October, with admission set at everyone's favourite price. Keep up with current information by becoming digi-buddies on Facebook.

FAVOURITES.

THE BEST BITS.

ARCHIMEDES SOCIAL FORESTRY. SOCIAL-FORESTRY.CO.UK 07957 496161 (SARAH).

When it comes to woodlands, forests and general greenery, we Sheffielders are a pretty lucky bunch. With so much natural environment surrounding us we have an opportunity to engage with nature that is unique among the country's major cities. One team of people exploiting this fact to the fullest is Archimedes Social Forestry. They aim to maximise the potential for learning by engaging with these environments, running workshops and offering the chance to learn woodland skills to both young people and adults. Their projects are run by highly qualified and experienced staff and are specific to the needs of the group, whether they are school groups, adults, offenders or young people out of work and not in education.

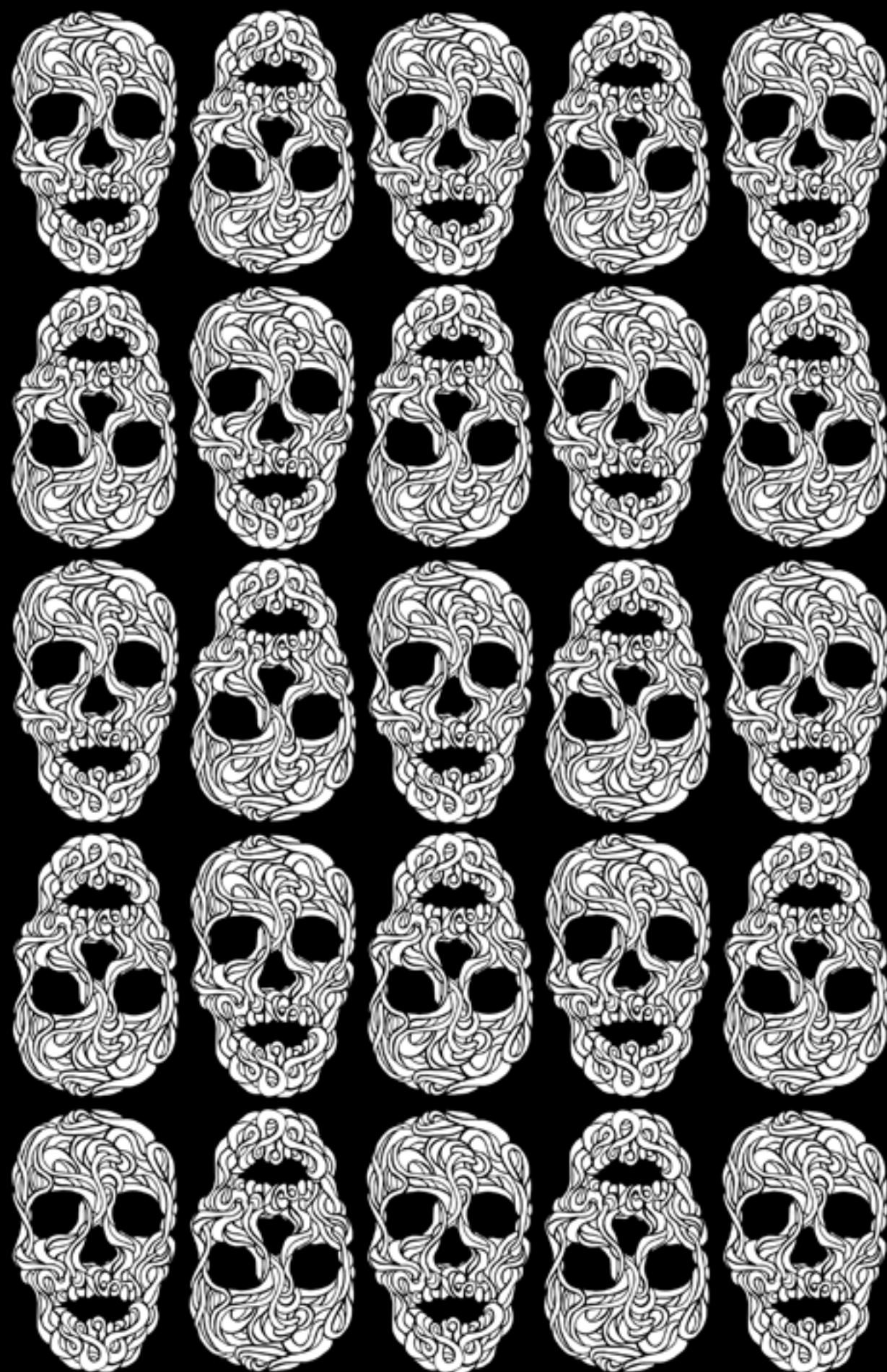
The Woodland Adventure Club, hosted by the Ecclesall Woods Saw Mill on Abbey Lane, is a great way to see what the guys at Archimedes get up to and places can be booked by calling Kenny on 07866 982985 or emailing kennycomain@hotmail.com.

ABUNDANCE. HTTP://BIT.LY/4CYUL

We've featured the Abundance project before, but that's no reason not to mention them again. They are still doing amazing work and what's more, they're receiving well deserved accolades too! The Sheffield Abundance project won the top spot in the Grassroots category of this year's Observer Ethical Awards. So for anyone who still doesn't know who they are, visit the website to meet your local neighbourhood urban scrumpers. Taking advantage of the food just begging to be picked all over Sheffield's trees and bushes and turning it into jam, chutney and all manner of taste-bud tingling goodness, these happy chaps and chappettes will whisk that unwanted fruit away and redistribute it around the community. Waste not, want not and do it with a smile.

SHEFFIELD TECHNO INSTITUTE. 10TH SEPTEMBER. RED HOUSE.

Minimal techno is sorely underrepresented in Sheffield. Go to Manchester and you are drowning in it, but over here minimal nights are few and far between. Sheffield Techno Institute is here to change all that, beginning a monthly residency at the Red House on Solly Street this month. Will Lewis (This is Sick) from across the Pennines will headline, supported by Terry Dragatis, who is a Planet Zogg favourite and recently released a mix on Sheffield's Planet Terror Records. Residents Cellar Dweller and Anagramm will fill the gaps. Search 'Sheffield Techno Institute' on Facebook to join the group and sample the kind of tunes that will be played on the night. The menu also includes acid techno. £3 in - can't say fairer than that.



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